

Message Text

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SUBJ: OPENING OF SOVIET CONSULATE IN NEW YORK CITY

REFS: STATE'S 058225, USUN'S 897 OF MAR 19, 1975.

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
OF FEBRUARY 12, 1976 CONCERNING OPENING OF SOVIET CONSULATE
IN NEW YORK CITY.

QUOTE:

THE RUSSIANS RETURNING TO THE EAST SIDE

BY BRYANT MASON

AFTER A 28-YEAR BANISHMENT, THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT IS
OPENING A CONSULATE HERE IN A LANDMARK EAST SIDE MANSION.

THE CONSULATE WILL OCCUPY A FIVE-STORY BUILDING AT 9
E. 91ST ST. THAT ONCE BELONGED TO JOHN HENRY HAMMOND,
LAWYER AND BANKER, AND HIS WIFE, THE FORMER EMILY VANDERBILT
SLOANE, AN HEIRESS TO SLOAN AND VANDERBILT FORTUNES.

THE LAND WAS SOLD IN 1901 BY STEEL TYCOON ANDREW CARNEIGE
TO A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE, WILLIAM D. SLOAN OF THE W.

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AND J. SLOANE FURNITURE STORE FORTUNE. SLOANE LATER GAVE

THE PROPERTY TO HIS DAUGHTER AS A WEDDING GIFT.

THE STATELY MANSION WAS PURCHASED LAST AUGUST BY THE RUSSIANS FOR \$1.6 MILLION FROM DR. RAMON CASTROVIEJO, A PROMINENT, SPANISH-BORN OPHTHALMOLOGIST WHO ONCE LIVED IN THE BUILDING AND OPERATED A HOSTIPAL ON THE PREMISES.

THE SOVIETS ARE BEING ALLOWED TO OPEN THE CONSULATE AS A RESULT OF A DIPLOMATIC AGREEMENT REACHED BY FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON DURING A SUMMIT MEETING IN MOSCOW IN JUNE OF 1974.

IN RETURN, AN AMERICAN CONSULATE IS TO OPEN IN KIEV, ACCORDING TO STATE DEPARTMENT SOURCES IN WASHINGTON.

THE RUSSIANS HAVE NOT HAD A CONSULATE HERE SINCE A CELEBRATED CONFRONTATION IN 1948 OVER THE ATTEMPTED DEFECTION OF A RUSSIAN TEACHER WHO LEAPED FROM A THIRD-STORY WINDOW OF THE PREVIOUS CONSULATE, AT 7 E. 61ST ST. THE WOMAN, OKSANA KASENKINA, WAS INJURED IN THE FALL BUT GAINED HER FREEDOM THROUGH THE INTERVENTION OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT. SHE DIED IN MIAMI IN 1960.

THE SITE OF THE NEW RUSSIAN CONSULATE BECAME KNOWN TUESDAY AT AN UNPUBLICIZED HEARING BEFORE THE CITY'S LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION. THE JOHN HENRY HAMMOND HOUSE IS UNDER THE PROTECTION OF CITY LASW DESIGNED TO PRESERVE HISTORIC BUILDINGS.

A CONSULATE HAS DIPLOMATIC PROTECTION, AND WHATEVER CONSTRUCTION IS DONE IS NOBODY'S BUSINESS EXCEPT THAT OF THE OWNERS. BUT IN THIS CASE, THE RUSSIANS REQUESTED PERMISSION TO INSTALL AN EIGHT-FOOT-HIGH FENCE ALONG THE FRONT OF THE RESIDENCE. A STAINLESS STEEL RETRACTABLE ACCESS GATE WILL ALSO BE INSTALLED ACROSS THE DRIVEWAY ON E. 91ST ST.

OTHER CHANGES WILL INVOLVE PLACEMENT OF IRON SHUTTERS ON THE FIRST AND THE SECOND-FLOOR WINDOWS. ALL OF THE CHANGES WERE APPROVED BY THE LANDMARKS COMMISSION.

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